

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for processing an image file and producing a consistent
5 structure for visual medium materials contained within the file, the apparatus comprising:
a storage medium, whereby source and destination file addresses are specified;
an unprocessed image file stored at the source address;
at least a first conversion routine that retrieves unprocessed image file uses it to
produce a vector-based medium file which is placed on the storage medium;
10 at least a second conversion routine that retrieves the vector-based medium file
and uses it to produce a consistently structured file which is placed on the storage
medium.

2. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the consistently structured file is a
15 PostScript file which is incorporated into a Print Ready File.

3. The apparatus of Claim 2, wherein the user creates and passes parameter
files that have settings for creating the consistently structured PostScript file, and for
indicating the source and destination file addresses.

4. The apparatus of Claim 3, wherein the unprocessed image file includes an
Encapsulated Postscript (EPS) file.

5. The apparatus of Claim 4, wherein the at least first conversion routine
25 includes a PostScript interpreter.

6. The apparatus of Claim 5, wherein the PostScript interpreter includes
Adobe Distiller.

7. The apparatus of Claim 5, wherein the vector-based medium file is a
30 Portable Document Format (PDF) file.

8. The apparatus of Claim 5, wherein the at least second conversion routine includes the PDF Library routine PDFExport Plot.

5 9. The apparatus of Claim 8, wherein the consistently structured PostScript file includes a Level 1 ASCII PostScript file.

10 10. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein a plurality of policies are used to produce the consistently structured PostScript file, the policies including settings for file attributes.

11. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the policies include color settings.

15 12. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein certain file attributes are validated against stored file processing capabilities.

13. The apparatus of Claim 12, wherein the file attributes being validated include ink types.

20 14. The apparatus of Claim 12, wherein the file attributes being validated include font types.

25 15. The apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the storage medium includes a file server.

5/15 A2 > 16. An apparatus to normalize the information in a file, as shared between a variety of software applications working on the file, the apparatus comprising:
a source Encapsulated PostScript (EPS) file, whereby the EPS file contains
30 unstructured information required to create a printed document containing graphics images;

at least a first conversion module for converting the source EPS file to a Portable Document Format (PDF) file, whereby the file is structured using a PDF library of functions;

at least a second conversion module converting the PDF file to a normalized EPS
5 file having a shared data structure, whereby software applications can use the shared data structure to access the normalized file in a printing operation.

17. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein the software applications access the normalized file in an automated manner.

10 18. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein the normalization of the information is performed as a prior Prepress operation to the printing operation.

15 19. The apparatus of Claim 16, wherein the normalized EPS file includes a ASCII Level 1 PostScript file.